

Message Text

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TAGS: CVIS, BTRA, UR, US

SUBJECT:ADDITIONAL BRIEFING MATERIAL FOR U.S. DELEGATION
TO JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION

PASS KOVNER

COMMERCIAL VISAS AND TRAVEL

U.S. POSITION. DEPARTMENT OF STATE PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN
PARED TO THE MINIMUM ESSENTIAL TO ENFORCEMENT OF OUR STATU-
TORY RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY
ACT, ENFORCEMENT OF U.S. TRAVEL CONTROLS AND PROVISION OF
THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY OTHER USG AGENCIES TO FULFILL
THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FACILITATING AND MONITORING SOVIET
VISITS. THE RESULT OF THESE PROCEDURES HAS BEEN TO PERMIT
SOVIETS MUCH FREER ACCESS TO INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES IN THE
U.S. THAN AMERICANS ENJOY IN THE SOVIET UNION.

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THE U.S. ATTEMPTED TO FACILITATE SOVIET TRAVEL FURTHER BY SUSPENDING AT THE END OF JANUARY THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBMIT FORMAL EXCEPTION REQUESTS FOR SOVIET TRAVEL TO CLOSED AREAS IN THE U.S. THIS REQUIREMENT HAD RESULTED IN THE DELAY OR CANCELLATION OF A NUMBER OF VISITS, DESPITE OUR ASSURANCES THAT THE EXCEPTION WOULD BE GRANTED UPON REQUEST.

SOVIET OFFICIALS CAN TAKE A NUMBER OF STEPS WHICH WOULD FACILITATE THEIR U.S. VISA AND TRAVEL CLEARANCE IN INDIVIDUAL CASES.

-- THESE INCLUDE TIMELY SUBMISSION OF VISA APPLICATIONS; PROVISION OF COMPLETE ITINERARY INFORMATION ON APPLICATIONS; CONTACTING AMERICAN COMPANIES BEFORE LISTING THEIR NAMES ON APPLICATIONS; AND PERMITTING MORE SCHEDULE FLEXIBILITY BY ALLOWING SOVIET CITIZENS TO FLY ON OTHER AIRLINES WHEN AEROFLOT SEATS ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

OVER THE LONG TERM THE PROBLEM OF VISA AND TRAVEL CLEARANCE CAN BE EASED BY SOVIET AGREEMENT TO ISSUE MULTIPLE-ENTRY EXIT VISAS ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS TO RESIDENT FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN, WHO MUST CONTINUOUSLY REAPPLY FOR VISAS. SOME OF THE FORMALITIES COULD BE ABBREVIATED IF THE SOVIETS WOULD AGREE TO U.S. PROPOSALS FOR RECIPROCAL REDUCTION IN TRAVEL CONTROLS; WE HAVE REPEATEDLY OFFERED TO NEGOTIATE REDUCTIONS OR TO RECIPROCATATE ANY SOVIET RELAXATION WHICH APPLIED TO ALL U.S. CITIZENS.

TALKING POINTS

-- OUR PRELIMINARY STATISTICS FOR 1974 GRAPHICALLY DEMONSTRATE OUR POLICY OF ENCOURAGING MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COMMERCIAL CONTACTS. DURING 1974, OVER 1,600 SOVIET CITIZENS VISITED MORE THAN 700 AMERICAN COMPANIES LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

-- PARTICULARLY STRIKING IS A SIXFOLD INCREASE IN THE TRAVEL OF RESIDENT STAFFS OF SOVIET COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES FILED MORE THAN 1,000 REQUESTS FOR TRAVEL, INVOLVING MORE THAN 500 EXCEPTIONS TO U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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TRAVEL REGULATIONS. FEWER THAN 20 EXCEPTION REQUESTS WERE DENIED.

-- IN ADDITION, 200-ODD LONG-TERM SOVIET COMMERCIAL VISITORS, PRESENT IN THE U.S. FOR PERIODS OVER SIX MONTHS, MOST OF THEM WORKING ON THE KAMA PROJECT, WERE GRANTED MORE THAN 3,000 REQUESTS FOR TRAVEL. APPROXIMATELY TWO-THIRDS OF THESE REQUESTS INVOLVED EXCEPTIONS TO U.S. REGULATIONS.

(BY CONTRAST, AMERICANS HAVE OFTEN ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTY EVEN VISITING THE SITE OF THE KAMA PROJECT IN THE USSR).

-- UNFORTUNATELY, MANY AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN TELL US THAT THEIR VISAS ARE LIMITED TO MOSCOW OR A HANDFUL OF OTHER LARGE CITIES, AND THEIR VISITS CONFINED TO EXECUTIVE OFFICES.

BY CONTRAST, SOVIETS VISITING THE U.S. GENERALLY TOUR THE PLANTS OF A NUMBER OF COMPANIES LOCATED IN SEVERAL STATES. OF COURSE, THE WIDER-RANGING SOVIET ITINERARIES DO REQUIRE TIME TO CLEAR.

-- SOVIET OFFICIALS COULD TAKE A NUMBER OF STEPS TO FACILITATE THEIR U.S. VISA AND TRAVEL CLEARANCE. ONE IMPORTANT STEP IS TO APPLY ON TIME. U.S. REGULATIONS AND INTERNAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRE SUBMISSION OF COMMERCIAL VISA APPLICATIONS THREE WEEKS IN ADVANCE. HOWEVER, DURING 1974 THE AVERAGE SOVIET COMMERCIAL VISA APPLICATION WAS SUBMITTED LESS THAN TEN WORKING DAYS IN ADVANCE OF THE REQUESTED DATE OF DEPARTURE.

-- WE WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF SUBMITTING COMPLETE ITINERARY INFORMATION ON THE VISA APPLICATIONS AND OF CONFIRMING VISITS WITH AMERICAN COMPANIES BEFORE LISTING THEM ON THE APPLICATIONS.

-- ITINERARY SCHEDULING AND THEREFORE VISA ISSUANCE PROBLEMS COULD BE LESSENED BY GIVING SOVIET CITIZENS THE OPTION OF PURCHASING PAN AMERICAN TICKETS WHEN SEATS ON AEROFLOT ARE UNAVAILABLE.

-- THE U.S. HAS MOVED TO FACILITATE VISA ISSUANCE AND TRAVEL CLEARANCE BY SUSPENDING THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE MFA

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SUBMIT FORMAL REQUESTS FOR SOVIET TRAVEL TO CLOSED AREAS IN THE U.S.

-- THE NEED TO CONTINUOUSLY REAPPLY FOR VISAS COULD BE ELIMINATED BY SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF A U.S. PROPOSAL TO ISSUE MULTIPLE ENTRY-EXIT VISAS ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS TO RESIDENT BUSINESSMEN.

-- THE PRINCIPAL STEP WE COULD TAKE TO FACILITATE VISA ISSUANCE IS TO ABBREVIATE THE TRAVEL CLEARANCE PROCEDURE BY AN AGREEMENT FOR RECIPROCAL MODIFICATION OF CONTROLS. IF YOU AGREE, THIS QUESTION CAN BE DISCUSSED AT A LOWER LEVEL.

BACKGROUND

PROCEDURES FOR ISSUANCE OF U.S. COMMERCIAL VISAS TO SOVIETS
REQUIRE APPROXIMATELY THREE WEEKS AND INVOLVE THE FOLLOWING
STEPS:

1) COMPLETION OF SECURITY NAME CHECKS AT FBI AND CIA. STATE
RECOMMENDS APPROVAL AND INS MUST CONCUR IN VISA ISSUANCE.
IN A RISING NUMBER OF SECURITY PROBLEM CASES THE FBI HAS

OBJECTED TO VISA ISSUANCE.

----- THIS HAS LED TO A SIGNIFI-
CANT NUMBER OF REFUSALS AND DELAYS.

2) NOTIFICATION BY STATE TO COMPANIES LISTED IN VISA APPLI-
CATIONS. FREQUENTLY THE COMPANIES REQUEST THAT WE REFUSE
OR DELAY VISITS, AND WE DO SO.

3) SUBMISSION TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT BY COMPANIES OF ITIN-
ERARIES OF VISITS. THIS REQUIREMENT FREQUENTLY RESULTS IN
DELAY, PARTICULARLY IF THE COMPANY HAD NO ADVANCE NOTICE
FROM THE SOVIETS.

4) CLEARANCE OF TRAVEL THROUGH RECIPROCAL TRAVEL CONTROLS.
REQUESTS TO VISIT CERTAIN CLOSED AREAS REQUIRE STATE AND
DEFENSE CONCURRENCE. HOWEVER, REFUSALS ARE RARE.

5) REVIEW OF ITINERARIES BY OTHER USG AGENCIES (OFFICE OF
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EXPORT ADMINISTRATION AT COMMERCE, DOD, ERDA AND NASA) FOR
CONFORMITY WITH EXPORT CONTROL (INCLUDING TECHNICAL DATA
REGULATIONS) AND CLASSIFIED CONTRACTOR REGULATIONS. THIS
PROCEDURE IS EXPEDITIOUS AND REFUSALS ARE RARE. MOST OB-
JECTIONS ARE RESOLVED BY SUBSTITUTION OF ANOTHER COMPANY
INSTALLATION OR INSTITUTION OF SPECIAL SECURITY PRO-
CEDURES.

U.S. PROCEDURES ARE ESSENTIALLY SIMILAR TO SOVIET PROCEDURES,
WHICH REQUIRE REFERENCE OF VISA APPLICATIONS TO MOSCOW, AP-
PLICANTS' SUBMISSION OF INVITATION FROM A SOVIET ORGANIZA-
TION, WHICH OBTAIN OTHER NECESSARY SOVIET GOVERNMENT CLEAR-
ANCES. ONE MAJOR DIFFERENCE IS THAT AMERICAN VISITS ARE
GENERALLY LIMITED BY THE SOVIETS TO EXECUTIVE OFFICES IN
MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD. FOR THAT REASON TIME CONSUMING GEO-
GRAPHICAL AND INSTALLATION CLEARANCES ARE UNNECESSARY. KISSINGER

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